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National Library  
of Medicine

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

January 10, 1997

Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission, Room 222  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Sir/Madam:

The Friends of the National Library of Medicine is pleased to provide comments to your Universal Service proceedings.

Please contact Mr. Keith Krueger, Executive Director of the Friends of the NLM, if you have any questions. He may be reached at (202) 462-0992 ext. 18.

Sincerely,

*Thomas Bryant*  
Thomas E. Bryant, MD, JD  
President

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JAN 10 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Federal-State Joint Board on	)	CC Docket No.
Universal Service	)	96-45

**Comments of the Friends of the National Library of Medicine  
Universal Service Decision**

The Friends of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) endorse the comments filed by Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Telemedicine Association on December relating to health care provisions in the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The Friends of the NLM is a nonprofit, broadbased coalition of individuals, institutions and corporations that promote the resources and services of the U.S. National Library of Medicine, the world's largest collection of medical and scientific information. The Friends are active in promoting electronic dissemination of scientific and medical information to improve health. Our motto is, "The More You Know, The Better You Heal".

We share the AAMC and ATA positions which echo the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Telemedicine and Health Care. We summarize these positions as:

- The use of the Internet is an essential and growing delivery mechanism for health care

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information. The National Library of Medicine has played a vital leadership role in promoting use of online medical and scientific information, and in recent years has provided a range of services over the Internet. Just this past spring the Library introduced "Internet Grateful Med" which literally brings abstracts of the world's medical literature (MEDLINE, AIDSLINE, CANCERLINE, TOXLINE and many others) to your computer via the Internet. In addition, the Library provides a range of valuable health resources on the World Wide Web via their homepage. We envision this type of electronic biomedical communications via the so-called Information Superhighway will only increase in coming years.

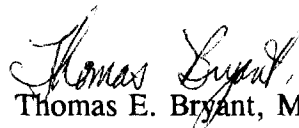
- Bandwidth and transmission speeds will need to increase progressively to meet the needs of telemedicine and telehealth applications. There are many existing applications in rural and academic medical settings that require speeds of up to the equivalent of T1 levels (1.544 Mbps). The ATA also makes sensible recommendations for rural areas where 112 Kbyte levels of service are not currently available, and encourages use of the Universal Service Funds to help pay for this deployment.
  
- Affordable telecommunications rates for the provision of health care in rural areas at rates that are reasonably comparable to rates that are charged in urban areas are essential.

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These are exciting times for improving health via advanced information technologies. We encourage the Commission to support policies which will enable all health care facilities, particularly rural facilities, to be part of this exciting future.

The Friends of the NLM appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important matter.

For the Friends of the National Library of Medicine

  
Thomas E. Bryant, MD, JD, President

January 9, 1997